

CH-14  
Chimney House (Ridgate-Compton House)  
Port Tobacco

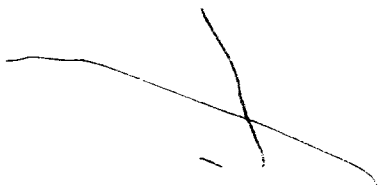
third quarter 18th century

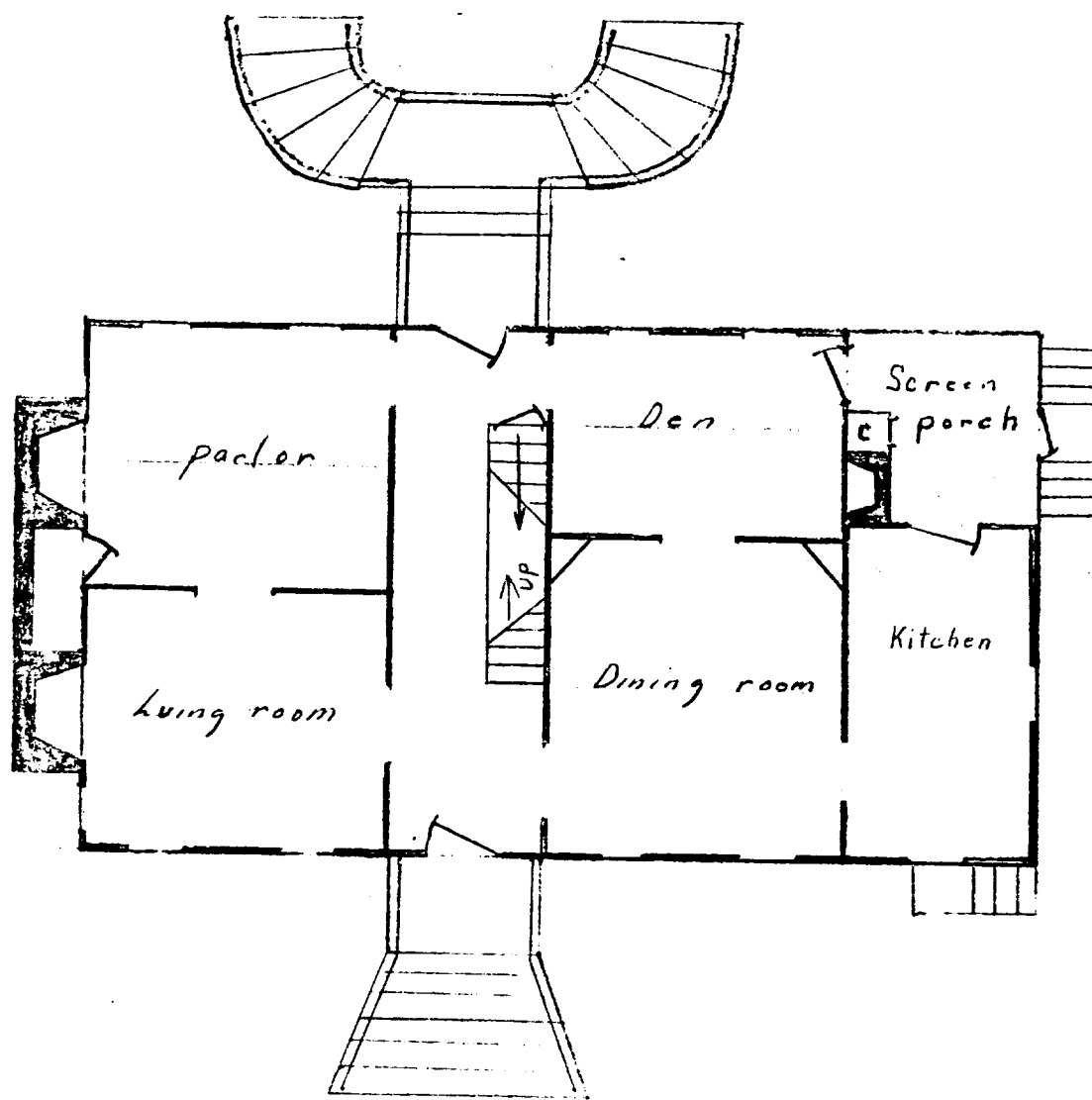
A large two-story frame house dating from the third quarter of the eighteenth century, Chimney House may stand on the site of a dwelling built in the 1730s by Robert Hanson. Construction of the existing house is attributed to merchant Thomas Howe Ridgate, and it originally functioned as a combined residence and store. It is noted for its impressive double chimney with a three-story connecting pent that stands at the west end. Containing six fireplaces, closets at the first and second floor levels, and a large arched doorway at the base, this chimney is an especially fine example of the early nineteenth century vernacular architecture of lower Southern Maryland. A 1796 advertisement described this building as having a "large store and back storeroom" at the first floor, "four rooms and a passage upstairs . . . piazzas and platforms on the north, south and part of the west end," as well as a kitchen and washhouse. Used as a tavern, lawyer's offices, and a court building at various times in the nineteenth century, it had fallen into disrepair when it was purchased and restored circa 1930 by Mrs. Alice Fergusson, a local philanthropist. This was the first restoration project to take place in the town and one of the first in Charles County. Chimney House meets the criteria necessary for individual listing in the National Register for its local architectural significance.

1. STATE <b>Maryland</b> COUNTY <b>Charles</b> TOWN STREET NO. VICINITY <b>Port Tobacco</b> Chapel Point Road ORIGINAL OWNER ORIGINAL USE PRESENT OWNER <b>C. Wm. Nalley</b> PRESENT USE <b>dwelling</b> WALL CONSTRUCTION <b>frame and brick</b> NO. OF STORIES <b>2</b>		HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY INVENTORY <b>CH - 14</b> 2. NAME <b>Chimney House 0900145104</b> DATE OR PERIOD <b>c. 1750</b> STYLE <b>Colonial</b> ARCHITECT BUILDER 3. FOR LIBRARY OF CONGRESS USE	
4. NOTABLE FEATURES, HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND DESCRIPTION OPEN TO PUBLIC <b>no</b> <p>Chimney House is one of the few houses remaining in Port Tobacco. It is a two-story house of frame covered with wide clapboards on a high brick foundation. It is five bays long and two bays deep. The central door has six panels and a four-pane transom. The windows have louvered shutters throughout and nine over nine sash on the first floor and six over six sash on the second floor. There is a one-story, one-bay wing to the east of the main house; it also has a nine over nine sash. The basement windows are covered with a grill of vertical iron bars. The door is reached by a long flight of brick steps with an iron railing. On the east side there is one exterior chimney. The single most outstanding feature of the building is the west double chimney stack with a two story pent between. Four small windows and an arched entrance to the basement break the wall at this end of the building. The chimneys stand free of the wall above the pent roof. Here between the pair of chimneys are located two narrow attic windows.</p> <p>A marker erected by St. Columba Lodge No. 150 AF &amp; A.M., LaPlata, Maryland 1932, reads: "Port Tobacco, The Indian Village of Potobac visited in 1608 by Capt. John Smith, occupied this site. County seat of Charles County 1658 - 1895. Washington visited here frequently. Site of St. Columba Lodge No. 11 AF &amp; A.M. Chartered April 18, 1793."</p>			
5. PHYSICAL CONDITION OF STRUCTURE    Endangered    Interior <b>very good</b> Exterior <b>very good</b>			
6. LOCATION MAP (Plan Optional)		7. PHOTOGRAPH	
8. PUBLISHED SOURCES (Author, Title, Pages) INTERVIEWS, RECORDS, PHOTOS, ETC. <b>Forman, Early Manor... 1934, 272</b> <b>Wilson, Md's Col. Mansions 1965</b> <b>p. 217</b>		9. NAME, ADDRESS AND TITLE OF RECORDER <b>Michael O. Bourne</b> <b>Maryland Historical Trust</b>  DATE OF RECORD <b>March 14, 1968</b>	

CHIMNEY HOUSE  
(Barnes Compton House)

C. 1766

- Originally the home of Thomas Ridgate, a Scottish merchant, this two story frame house has as its most distinguished feature, a massive pair of exterior chimneys at the west end. The flush, two story, brick connecting pent has two narrow windows at both the first and second floor level and a large arched doorway at the cellar level.
- At various times during the nineteenth century, the building housed legal offices, largely due to its size and close proximity to the County courthouse. It is believed that during both the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the cellar was used as a small warehouse. Chimney House faced directly onto the village green and had its gardens and domestic dependencies at the north side. The building was restored in the late 1920's by Mrs. Alice Fergusson. At that time the house was in an advanced state of deterioration and little of the original interior fabric could be salvaged.
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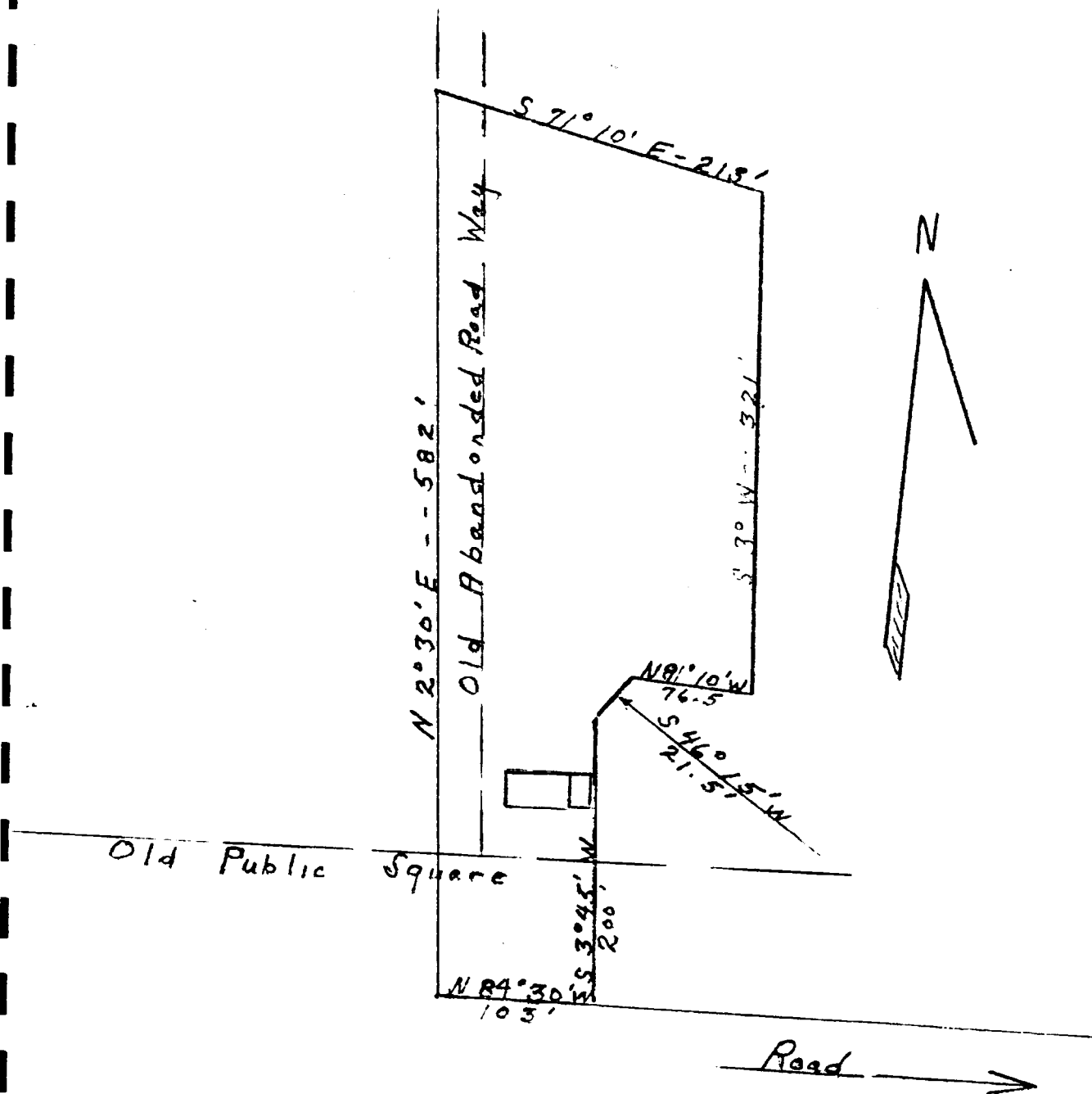
1st Floor Plan

Scale

1" = 10'

Chimney House

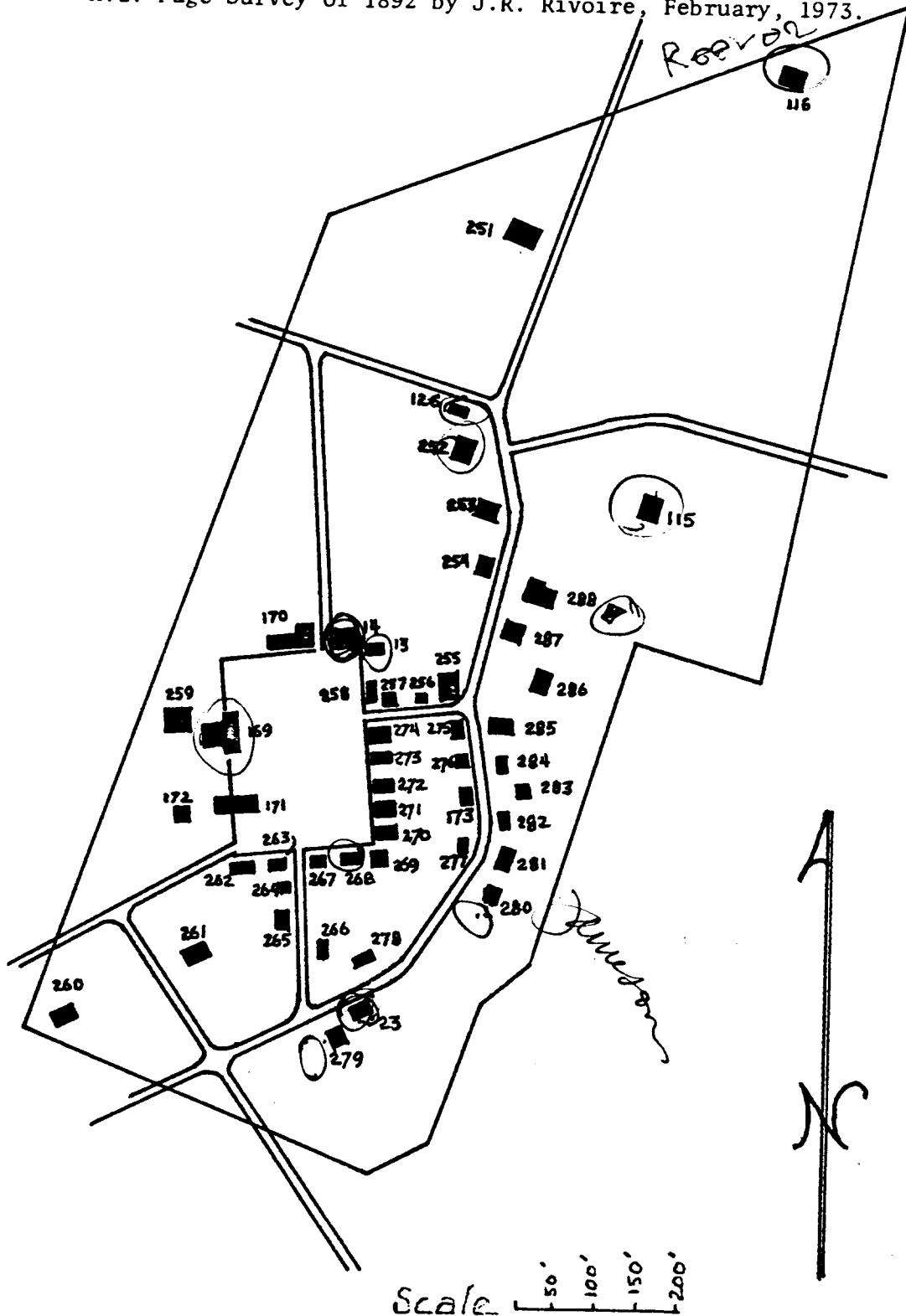
By Carl Baldus, Jr.,  
Baldus Real Estate



Scale  
1" = 100'

Copy of deed description  
Showing lines by the  
holding & Fenced

1892 Boundaries of the Village of Port Tobacco, Charles County,  
Maryland, Showing the Locations of Buildings, Sites, and Areas  
(Aboriginal and Colonial) of Archaeological Significance, that  
Exist Within the Settlement. Reduced and Drawn from the Original  
H.C. Page Survey of 1892 by J.R. Rivoire, February, 1973.





CH-14

1/6

100%



ch.14(A) 73%

~~100%~~ P.61

F

CH-14  
CHIMNEY  
HOUSE



33' 12" 0



G

CH-14  
CHIMNEY  
HOUSE

